

Utah Veterans Advisory Council
Minutes of Monthly Meeting
July 16th, 2025

Place: Zoom online meeting

Members Present: Marti Bigbie, Gary Harter, Bob Pagnani, Steve Prestwich, John Robertson, Paula Stephenson, Angela Williams

Excused: Laurie Charry, Chris Holly, Dave Phillips

Secretary: Alan Ferner

Guests: Nancy Espinosa, Joe Guimond, Jeff Hanson, Cory Pearson, Taylor Ricks, Terry Schow

1. The meeting was called to order at 4:03 PM by Paula Stephenson. Paula introduced and welcomed those in attendance. This was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. The minutes of our 18 June meeting were reviewed and approved by the members of the Council.
3. VA Regional Office: No report.
4. VA Medical Center: Angela Williams advised that they do not anticipate a large RIF, and will continue to move forward. The VAMC will be participating in the Veteran and Military Family Expo on 18 July. The Outreach at Weber State is now progressing very well. Angela also gave us an update on the clinics.
5. Utah Dept. Veterans & Military Affairs: Gary Harter provided a summary of his recent visits to the Ivins and Payson Veterans Homes, as well as the Southern Utah Veterans Cemetery. Gary also advised that a Veterans and Military Affairs Commission meeting is scheduled for 18 August.

Jeff Hanson summarized the status of the four Utah Veteran Nursing Homes. The four Homes are at 94% occupancy; consisting of 379 Veterans, 13 spouses, and 5% in short term rehabilitation. Federal funding for the new SLC Home is probably a few years out. Jeff reported that the Cemetery road improvement project has been completed.

Cory Pearson updated us on the Governor's Suicide Prevention Program. There is an order in for 400 more gun safes. VSOs continue to be very busy with 441 claims processed last month. Cory reminded us of the 18 July event with the VA at the Larry Miller Campus.

Taylor Ricks announced That the video project which explains Veteran benefits will soon be going up on the Website. Taylor provided further details for the 18 July event.

6. Steve Prestwich (DAV State Commander) and John Robertson (Am. Legion State Commander) were welcomed to the Council.
7. Bob Pagnani advised of an upcoming “Little Warriors” camp that starts Friday, 25 July
8. Paula Stephenson provided information on “Boys Nation.” Also, 7 August will be the 100th Anniversary of American Legion Baseball.
9. The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 PM by Bob Pagnani. Our next monthly meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 20th at 4:00 PM, via Zoom online.